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Technical information: cpsinfo@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/cps
Media contact: (202) 691-5902 • PressOffice@bls.gov

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND WORK ACTIVITY OF RECENT HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE GRADUATES — 2019

In October 2019, 66.2 percent of 2019 high school graduates ages 16 to 24 were enrolled in colleges or universities, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Among 20- to 29-year-olds who received a bachelor's degree in 2019, 76.0 percent were employed.

Information on school enrollment and employment status is collected monthly in the Current Population Survey (CPS), a nationwide survey of about 60,000 households that provides information on employment and unemployment. Each October, a supplement to the CPS gathers more detailed information about recent degree recipients and school enrollment. In addition to data on recent high school graduates ages 16 to 24, this news release presents information on recent degree recipients ages 20 to 29. For more information, see the Technical Note in this news release.

Following are some highlights from the October 2019 data:

- Among recent high school graduates ages 16 to 24, college enrollment rates for men and women were 62.0 percent and 69.8 percent, respectively. (See table 1.)
- Among 16- to 24-year-olds, 38.2 percent of recent high school dropouts were working or looking for work, lower than the labor force participation rate of 72.2 percent for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college. (See table 1.)
- About 16.2 million persons ages 16 to 24 were not enrolled in school—42.9 percent of all persons in this age group. (See table 2.)
- Among 20- to 29-year-olds, 71.3 percent of recent associate degree recipients, 76.0 percent of recent bachelor's degree recipients, and 82.3 percent of recent advanced degree recipients were employed. (See table 3.)
- About one-fourth of recent bachelor's degree recipients ages 20 to 29 were enrolled in school. (See table 3.)

- Among 20- to 29-year-olds, unemployment rates for recent associate degree recipients, recent bachelor's degree recipients, and recent advanced degree recipients were 8.7 percent, 8.8 percent, and 12.9 percent, respectively. (See table 3.)

Recent High School Graduates and Dropouts (Ages 16 to 24)

Of the 3.2 million youth ages 16 to 24 who graduated from high school between January and October 2019, 2.1 million (66.2 percent) were enrolled in college in October. The college enrollment rate of recent high school graduates in October 2019 was down slightly from the rate in October 2018 (69.1 percent). (See table 1.)

Among 2019 high school graduates ages 16 to 24, the college enrollment rate for young women was 69.8 percent in October 2019, compared with 62.0 percent for young men. The college enrollment rate of Asians (89.9 percent) was higher than the rates for recent White (66.9 percent), Hispanic (63.4 percent), and Black (50.7 percent) graduates.

The labor force participation rate (the proportion of the population that is employed or looking for work) for recent high school graduates enrolled in college was 37.8 percent. The participation rates for male and female graduates enrolled in college were 35.6 percent and 39.5 percent, respectively.

Among recent high school graduates enrolled in college in October 2019, about 9 in 10 were full-time students. Recent graduates enrolled as full-time students were less than half as likely to be in the labor force (34.0 percent) as were their peers enrolled part time (78.8 percent).

About 2 in 3 recent high school graduates enrolled in college attended 4-year colleges. Of these students, 33.1 percent participated in the labor force in October 2019, lower than the 47.4 percent for recent graduates enrolled in 2-year colleges.

In October 2019, labor force participation was much higher for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college (72.2 percent) than for enrolled graduates (37.8 percent). The unemployment rate for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college was 18.2 percent, higher than the rate of 11.0 percent for recent graduates enrolled in college.

Between October 2018 and October 2019, 490,000 young people dropped out of high school. The labor force participation rate for recent dropouts (38.2 percent) was much lower than the rate for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college (72.2 percent). The jobless rate for recent high school dropouts was 14.8 percent in October 2019; the rate for recent high school graduates not enrolled in college was 18.2 percent.

All Youth Enrolled in High School or College (Ages 16 to 24)

In October 2019, 21.5 million 16- to 24-year-olds, or 57.1 percent of youth, were enrolled in high school (9.4 million) or in college (12.2 million). The labor force participation rate for youth enrolled in school, at 38.0 percent, increased from October 2018 to October 2019. The

unemployment rate (6.1 percent) for youth enrolled in school changed little from the previous year. (See table 2.)

In October 2019, high school students continued to be less likely than college students to participate in the labor force (22.3 percent, compared with 50.2 percent). The participation rates for male and female high school students were 21.0 percent and 23.7 percent, respectively.

Among college students, those enrolled full time were much less likely to participate in the labor force in October 2019 than were part-time students (44.5 percent versus 87.2 percent). Students at 4-year colleges were also less likely to be in the labor force than were students at 2-year schools (46.9 percent and 59.8 percent, respectively). Female college students were more likely to participate in the labor force than their male counterparts (53.6 percent, compared with 46.1 percent). By race and ethnicity, the labor force participation rate was lower for Asian college students (36.3 percent) than for their Black (46.5 percent), White (52.2 percent), and Hispanic (55.5 percent) counterparts.

The unemployment rate for high school students, at 11.3 percent in October 2019, continued to be higher than the rate for college students (4.3 percent).

All Youth Not Enrolled in School (Ages 16 to 24)

In October 2019, 16.2 million persons ages 16 to 24 were not enrolled in school. The labor force participation rate of youth not enrolled in school increased over the year to 81.2 percent. Among youth not enrolled in school in October 2019, young men continued to be more likely than young women to participate in the labor force (83.9 percent, compared with 78.1 percent). Labor force participation rates for not-enrolled men and women were highest for those with a bachelor's degree or higher (91.2 percent and 93.5 percent, respectively) and lowest for men and women with less than a high school diploma (63.9 percent and 52.6 percent, respectively). (See table 2.)

The unemployment rate for youth ages 16 to 24 not enrolled in school, at 8.6 percent, was little changed over the year. Among not-enrolled youth who did not have a high school diploma, unemployment rates in October 2019 were 16.1 percent for young men and 12.4 percent for young women. The jobless rates of young men and young women with at least a bachelor's degree were 5.8 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively. Among youth not enrolled in school, the unemployment rate was 15.7 percent for Blacks, 9.6 percent for Hispanics, 8.6 percent for Asians, and 7.0 percent for Whites.

Recent College Graduates (Ages 20 to 29)

Between January and October 2019, 1.1 million 20- to 29-year-olds earned a bachelor's degree; of these, 867,000 (or 76.0 percent) were employed in October 2019. The unemployment rate for recent college graduates with a bachelor's degree, at 8.8 percent, decreased from the previous year. (See table 3.)

Female recent bachelor's degree recipients were more likely to be employed than their male counterparts in October 2019 (79.4 percent versus 71.8 percent). The jobless rates for recent female and male bachelor's degree recipients were 7.5 percent and 10.6 percent, respectively.

About one-quarter (or 294,000) of recent bachelor's degree recipients were enrolled in school in October 2019. These recent graduates who were enrolled in school were much less likely to be employed than those who were not enrolled (51.9 percent versus 84.4 percent).

Between January and October 2019, 364,000 persons ages 20 to 29 earned an advanced degree—that is, a master's, professional, or doctoral degree. About 8 in 10 of those who recently earned an advanced degree were employed (82.3 percent). In October 2019, the unemployment rate for recent advanced degree recipients was 12.9 percent.

Recent Associate Degree Recipients (Ages 20 to 29)

Of the 360,000 20- to 29-year-olds who completed an associate degree between January and October 2019, 71.3 percent were employed in October 2019. The unemployment rate for recent associate degree recipients was 8.7 percent. (See table 3.)

Recent associate degree recipients ages 20 to 29 were more likely to have completed an academic program than a vocational program (67.8 percent, compared with 32.2 percent). Associate degrees in academic programs are primarily in the arts and sciences and are often transferable to a bachelor's degree program, while associate degrees in vocational programs prepare graduates for a specific occupation.

In October 2019, 160,000 (or 44.4 percent) recent associate degree recipients were enrolled in school. Of these recent recipients who were enrolled in school, 63.6 percent were employed. In October 2019, 77.4 percent of recent associate degree recipients who were not enrolled in school were employed.

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from a supplement to the October Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey of about 60,000 eligible households that provides information on the labor force, employment, and unemployment for the nation. The CPS is conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data in this release relate to the school enrollment status of persons in the civilian noninstitutional population in the calendar week that includes the 12th of October. Data about recent high school graduates and dropouts and the enrollment status of youth refer to persons 16 to 24 years of age. Data about recent associate degree recipients and college graduates refer to persons 20 to 29 years of age.

Updated population controls for the CPS are introduced annually with the release of January data. Additional information about population controls is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#pop.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Reliability of the estimates

Statistics based on the CPS are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the true population values they represent. The component of this difference that occurs because samples differ by chance is known as *sampling error*, and its variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. There is about a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the true population value because of sampling error. BLS analyses are generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence.

The CPS data also are affected by *nonsampling error*. Nonsampling error can occur for many reasons, including the failure to sample a segment of the population, inability to obtain information for all respondents in the sample, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data.

Additional information about the reliability of data from the CPS and estimating standard errors is available at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability.

Concepts

School enrollment. Respondents were asked whether they were currently enrolled in a regular school,

including day or night school in any type of public, parochial, or other private school. Regular schooling is that which may advance a person toward a high school diploma or a college, university, or professional degree. Such schools include elementary schools, junior or senior high schools, and colleges and universities.

Other schooling, including trade schools; on-the-job training; and courses that do not require physical presence in school, such as correspondence courses or other courses of independent study, is included only if the credits granted count towards promotion in regular school.

Full-time and part-time enrollment in college. College students are classified as attending full time if they were taking 12 hours of classes or more (or 9 hours of graduate classes) during an average school week and as part time if they were taking fewer hours.

High school graduation status. Persons who were not enrolled in school at the time of the survey were asked whether they had graduated from high school. Those who had graduated were asked when they completed their high school education. Persons who had not graduated, that is, school dropouts, were asked when they last attended a regular school. Those who were enrolled in college at the time of the survey also were asked when they graduated from high school.

Recent high school graduates. Persons age 16 to 24 who completed high school in the calendar year of the survey (January through October) are recent high school graduates.

Recent high school dropouts. Persons age 16 to 24 who were not enrolled in school at the time of the survey, attended school a year earlier, and did not have a high school diploma are recent dropouts.

Recent college graduates. Persons age 20 to 29 who completed a bachelor's degree or an advanced degree—that is, a master's, professional (such as law or medicine), or doctoral degree—in the calendar year of the survey (January through October) are recent college graduates.

Recent associate degree recipients. Persons age 20 to 29 who completed an associate degree (either an academic program or a vocational program) in the calendar year of the survey (January through October) are recent associate degree recipients. Associate degrees in academic programs are primarily in the arts and sciences and may be transferable to a bachelor's degree program, while associate degrees in vocational programs prepare graduates for a specific occupation.

Table 1. Labor force status of 2019 high school graduates and 2018-2019 high school dropouts 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, October 2019

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristic	Civilian noninstitutional population	Civilian labor force						Not in labor force
		Total	Percent of population	Employed		Unemployed		
				Total	Percent of population	Number	Rate	
RECENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES								
Total, 2019 high school graduates ¹	3,178	1,572	49.5	1,343	42.3	229	14.6	1,606
Men.....	1,486	728	49.0	598	40.3	130	17.8	758
Women.....	1,693	844	49.8	744	44.0	99	11.8	849
White.....	2,368	1,219	51.5	1,071	45.2	148	12.1	1,149
Black or African American.....	438	218	49.8	161	36.7	57	26.2	220
Asian.....	189	54	28.8	49	25.7	6	-	134
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	681	388	57.0	313	46.0	75	19.3	293
Enrolled in college								
Total, enrolled in college.....	2,103	795	37.8	707	33.6	88	11.0	1,308
Enrolled in 2-year college.....	692	328	47.4	276	39.9	52	15.9	364
Enrolled in 4-year college.....	1,411	467	33.1	431	30.6	36	7.6	944
Full-time students.....	1,924	654	34.0	583	30.3	71	10.8	1,270
Part-time students.....	179	141	78.8	124	69.3	17	12.1	38
Men.....	921	328	35.6	296	32.1	33	10.0	593
Women.....	1,182	467	39.5	412	34.9	55	11.7	715
White.....	1,585	626	39.5	571	36.0	55	8.8	959
Black or African American.....	222	90	40.3	71	31.9	19	20.9	133
Asian.....	170	39	23.2	37	21.6	3	-	130
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	432	199	46.0	172	39.9	27	13.4	233
Not enrolled in college								
Total, not enrolled in college.....	1,075	777	72.2	635	59.1	141	18.2	299
Men.....	564	400	70.8	303	53.7	97	24.2	165
Women.....	511	377	73.8	333	65.1	44	11.8	134
White.....	783	593	75.7	500	63.9	92	15.6	190
Black or African American.....	215	128	59.5	90	41.7	38	29.9	87
Asian.....	19	15	-	12	-	3	-	4
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	249	189	75.9	141	56.5	48	25.6	60
RECENT HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS								
Total, 2018-2019 high school dropouts ²	490	187	38.2	160	32.6	28	14.8	303
Men.....	245	91	37.0	71	28.9	20	21.9	154
Women.....	245	97	39.5	89	36.2	8	8.2	148
White.....	358	150	42.0	136	38.0	14	9.5	208
Black or African American.....	80	27	33.5	13	16.5	14	-	53
Asian.....	19	6	-	6	-	-	-	12
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	148	46	31.0	36	24.2	10	-	102

¹ Data refer to persons who graduated from high school in January through October 2019.

² Data refer to persons who dropped out of school between October 2018 and October 2019.

NOTE: Detail for the above race groups (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).

Table 2. Labor force status of persons 16 to 24 years old by school enrollment, educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, October 2019

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristic	Civilian noninstitutional population	Civilian labor force						Not in labor force
		Total	Percent of population	Employed		Unemployed		
				Total	Percent of population	Number	Rate	
Total, 16 to 24 years.....	37,734	21,331	56.5	19,702	52.2	1,628	7.6	16,403
Enrolled in school								
Total, enrolled in school.....	21,542	8,189	38.0	7,691	35.7	498	6.1	13,353
Enrolled in high school ¹	9,392	2,096	22.3	1,859	19.8	237	11.3	7,296
Men.....	4,922	1,036	21.0	904	18.4	132	12.7	3,886
Women.....	4,470	1,060	23.7	955	21.4	105	9.9	3,410
White.....	6,840	1,658	24.2	1,483	21.7	175	10.6	5,182
Black or African American.....	1,356	206	15.2	176	13.0	30	14.8	1,150
Asian.....	512	68	13.3	62	12.1	6	-	444
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	2,269	393	17.3	338	14.9	54	13.9	1,877
Enrolled in college.....	12,150	6,093	50.2	5,833	48.0	261	4.3	6,057
Enrolled in 2-year college.....	3,072	1,838	59.8	1,728	56.3	110	6.0	1,233
Enrolled in 4-year college.....	9,078	4,255	46.9	4,104	45.2	151	3.5	4,823
Full-time students.....	10,531	4,681	44.5	4,448	42.2	233	5.0	5,850
Part-time students.....	1,619	1,412	87.2	1,385	85.5	28	2.0	207
Men.....	5,530	2,548	46.1	2,405	43.5	143	5.6	2,982
Women.....	6,620	3,545	53.6	3,427	51.8	118	3.3	3,075
White.....	8,737	4,557	52.2	4,379	50.1	179	3.9	4,180
Black or African American.....	1,621	754	46.5	715	44.1	39	5.2	867
Asian.....	1,164	422	36.3	412	35.4	10	2.4	741
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	2,505	1,390	55.5	1,341	53.5	50	3.6	1,114
Not enrolled in school								
Total, not enrolled in school.....	16,192	13,142	81.2	12,011	74.2	1,131	8.6	3,050
16 to 19 years.....	3,332	2,291	68.7	1,979	59.4	311	13.6	1,042
20 to 24 years.....	12,860	10,851	84.4	10,032	78.0	819	7.6	2,009
Men.....	8,512	7,142	83.9	6,449	75.8	693	9.7	1,370
Less than a high school diploma.....	1,116	712	63.9	598	53.6	115	16.1	403
High school graduates, no college ²	4,369	3,740	85.6	3,320	76.0	420	11.2	629
Some college or associate degree.....	1,990	1,743	87.6	1,640	82.4	103	5.9	247
Bachelor's degree and higher ³	1,037	946	91.2	891	85.9	55	5.8	91
Women.....	7,680	6,000	78.1	5,562	72.4	438	7.3	1,680
Less than a high school diploma.....	855	449	52.6	394	46.1	56	12.4	405
High school graduates, no college ²	3,268	2,399	73.4	2,186	66.9	214	8.9	869
Some college or associate degree.....	1,971	1,668	84.6	1,570	79.7	97	5.8	304
Bachelor's degree and higher ³	1,586	1,484	93.5	1,413	89.0	71	4.8	102
White.....	12,075	9,898	82.0	9,209	76.3	690	7.0	2,176
Black or African American.....	2,570	2,040	79.4	1,720	66.9	320	15.7	530
Asian.....	640	505	79.0	462	72.2	44	8.6	134
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	4,024	3,229	80.3	2,920	72.6	309	9.6	795

¹ Includes a small number of persons enrolled in grades below high school.

² Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

³ Includes persons with bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.

NOTE: Detail for the above race groups (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).

Table 3. Labor force status of 2019 associate degree recipients and college graduates 20 to 29 years old by selected characteristics, October 2019

[Numbers in thousands]

Characteristic	Civilian noninstitutional population	Civilian labor force						Not in labor force
		Total	Percent of population	Employed		Unemployed		
				Total	Percent of population	Number	Rate	
RECENT ASSOCIATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS¹								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	360	281	78.0	257	71.3	24	8.7	79
Men.....	176	140	79.6	128	72.9	12	8.4	36
Women.....	185	141	76.5	129	69.7	13	8.9	43
20 to 24 years.....	257	189	73.6	165	64.1	24	12.9	68
25 to 29 years.....	103	92	89.0	92	89.0	-	-	11
Vocational program.....	116	105	90.3	90	77.6	15	14.1	11
Academic program.....	244	176	72.1	167	68.2	10	5.4	68
Enrolled in school.....	160	103	64.1	102	63.6	1	0.9	58
Not enrolled in school.....	200	178	89.1	155	77.4	23	13.1	22
RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATES²								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	1,504	1,295	86.1	1,167	77.5	128	9.9	210
Men.....	655	541	82.6	490	74.8	51	9.5	114
Women.....	849	753	88.7	677	79.7	77	10.2	96
20 to 24 years.....	1,014	843	83.1	774	76.3	69	8.2	171
25 to 29 years.....	491	452	92.1	393	80.1	59	13.1	39
Enrolled in school.....	320	179	55.8	179	55.8	-	-	142
Not enrolled in school.....	1,184	1,116	94.2	988	83.4	128	11.5	68
White.....	1,075	943	87.7	859	79.9	84	8.9	132
Black or African American.....	141	114	80.8	99	70.4	15	12.9	27
Asian.....	237	192	81.1	163	68.8	29	15.3	45
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	165	156	95.0	133	81.1	23	14.7	8
Bachelor's degree								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	1,141	951	83.4	867	76.0	84	8.8	190
Men.....	505	405	80.3	362	71.8	43	10.6	99
Women.....	636	545	85.8	505	79.4	41	7.5	90
20 to 24 years.....	932	772	82.8	710	76.2	61	7.9	160
25 to 29 years.....	208	179	85.9	157	75.2	22	12.4	29
Enrolled in school.....	294	153	51.9	153	51.9	-	-	142
Not enrolled in school.....	846	798	94.3	714	84.4	84	10.5	48
Advanced degree³								
Total, 20 to 29 years.....	364	344	94.5	300	82.3	44	12.9	20
Men.....	150	136	90.4	128	84.8	8	6.2	14
Women.....	213	208	97.4	172	80.6	36	17.3	6
20 to 24 years.....	82	71	86.8	63	77.7	7	-	11
25 to 29 years.....	282	273	96.7	236	83.7	37	13.5	9

¹ Data refer to persons who received an associate degree in January through October 2019.

² Data refer to persons who received a bachelor's or higher degree in January through October 2019.

³ Data refer to persons who received a master's, professional, or doctoral degree in January through October 2019.

NOTE: Detail for the above race groups (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).